

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you. Also, here is a copy of the email I received from Commissioner Copps, showing that he agrees with the points I am making above.

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FCC COMMISSIONER COPPS CRITICIZES SINCLAIR  
CORPORATE DECISION TO PREEMPT LOCAL  
STATIONS FOR POLITICAL BROADCAST

Commissioner Michael J. Copps reacted to reports that Sinclair Broadcast Group will preempt more than 60 local stations across the country to air an overtly political program in the days prior to the Presidential election.

Copps stated: "This is an abuse of the public trust. And it is proof positive of media consolidation run amok when one owner can use the public airwaves to blanket the country with its political ideology -- whether liberal or conservative. Some will undoubtedly question if this is appropriate stewardship of the public airwaves. This is the same corporation that refused to air Nightline's reading of our war dead in Iraq. It is the same corporation that short-shifts local communities and local jobs by distance-casting news and weather from hundreds of miles away. It is a sad fact that the explicit public interest protections we once had to ensure balance continue to be weakened by the Federal Communications Commission while it allows media conglomerates to get even bigger. Sinclair, and the FCC, are taking us down a dangerous road."

Thank you for your time, I will be following up on this and telling everyone I know to follow up on this.

-Tim Carroll